

## **Actions U.S. citizens can take in Response to Adoption Scams and Fraud**

The Department of State is aware of a growing number of adoption scams in which individuals are offering to match prospective adoptive parents with a child who is allegedly available for intercountry adoption. In Hague Adoption Convention countries, matching is done by the Central Authority, another public authority, and in some cases, by accredited bodies, but not by private individuals. U.S. citizen prospective adoptive parents should refer to the relevant [country information sheet](#) and fully understand that country's adoption requirements before sending money to any individual in connection with adopting a child, especially if correspondence with that individual is limited to e-mail.

In addition to contacting law enforcement, families who believe they may have been affected by such a scam have several options for filing complaints with that information, discussed below:

### **Contact U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the Child's Country of Origin**

First, we strongly encourage families with concerns about their adoption process to share this information with the relevant U.S. Embassy or Consulate located in the child's country of origin, particularly if it involves possible fraud or misconduct specific to your adoption case. When reporting concerns, you may ask the Embassy or Consulate to keep your name confidential and, to the extent possible, redact the information that would permit your identification. The Department of State takes all allegations of fraud or misconduct seriously.

The best way to contact the Embassy or Consulate is by the email address listed on the Country Information Sheet posted at this link: [Country Information](#). Please include all appropriate information, including your name; the name of the child to be adopted; your adoption service provider; the date of the adoption (month and year); and, if possible, the immigrant visa case number for the child's case (this number begins with three letters followed by several numbers and can be found on any document sent to you by the National Visa Center).

## **Register a Complaint in the United States**

In addition, if your complaint concerns an adoption service provider, we strongly encourage you to register your complaint in the following ways:

- File a complaint with the [state licensing authority](#) where your adoption agency is licensed and conducts business. The Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is maintained by the Department of Health and Human Services, provides such a list.
- You may file a complaint on-line with the state's [Better Business Bureau](#).

## **Register a Complaint in the Hague Complaint Registry**

- If your complaint concerns a Hague-accredited or approved adoption service provider, we encourage you to file a complaint in the [Hague Complaint Registry](#) located at on the Department of State's adoption website. Complaints submitted to the Hague Complaint Registry are made available to the accrediting entity, the Council on Accreditation (COA). The accrediting entity reviews the complaint and, where the complaint raises questions of compliance with the federal accreditation standards, investigates the adoption service provider's conduct for compliance with those standards. When a complaint is substantiated, the accrediting entity takes appropriate action related to the adoption service provider's accreditation status.

## **Register an Internet Crime Complaint**

- You can also file an internet communication complaint with the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) and through the Travel.State.Gov (TSG) website page on [internet fraud](#).

The Department continues to work with the governments of countries of origin to ensure that appropriate safeguards exist to protect prospective adoptive children, birth parents, and prospective adoptive parents. Please continue to monitor [adoption.state.gov](http://adoption.state.gov) for updated information.